

**§ 14-151. Interfering with gas, electric and steam appliances or meters; penalties.**

(a) It shall be unlawful for any person to willfully, with intent to injure or defraud, commit any of the following acts:

- (1) Connect a tube, pipe, wire or other instrument or contrivance with a pipe or wire used for conducting or supplying illuminating gas, fuel, natural gas or electricity in such a manner as to supply such gas or electricity to any burner, orifice, lamp or motor where the same is or can be burned or used without passing through the meter or other instrument provided for registering the quantity consumed.
- (2) Obstruct, alter, bypass, tamper with, injure or prevent the action of a meter or other instrument used to measure or register the quantity of illuminating fuel, natural gas, water, or electricity passing through such meter by a person other than an employee of the company owning or supplying any gas, water, or electric meter, who willfully shall detach or disconnect such meter, or make or report any test of, or examine for the purpose of testing any meter so detached or disconnected.
- (3) In any manner whatever change, extend or alter any service or other pipe, wire or attachment of any kind, connecting with or through which natural or artificial gas or electricity is furnished from the gas mains or pipes of any person, without first procuring from said person written permission to make such change, extension or alterations.
- (4) Make any connection or reconnection with the gas mains, water pipes, service pipes or wires of any person, furnishing to consumers natural or artificial gas, water, or electricity, or turn on or off or in any manner interfere with any valve or stopcock or other appliance belonging to such person, and connected with his service or other pipes or wires, or enlarge the orifices of mixers, or use natural gas for heating purposes except through mixers, or electricity for any purpose without first procuring from such person a written permit to turn on or off such stopcock or valve, or to make such connection or reconnections, or to enlarge the orifice of mixers, or to use for heating purposes without mixers, or to interfere with the valves, stopcocks, wires or other appliances of such, as the case may be.
- (5) Retain possession of or refuse to deliver any mixer, meter, lamp or other appliance which may be leased or rented by any person, for the purpose of furnishing gas, water, electricity or power through the same, or sell, lend or in any other manner dispose of the same to any person other than such person entitled to the possession of the same.
- (6) Set on fire any gas escaping from wells, broken or leaking mains, pipes, valves or other appliances used by any person in conveying gas to consumers, or interfere in any manner with the wells, pipes, mains, gateboxes, valves, stopcocks, wires, cables, conduits or any other appliances, machinery or property of any person engaged in furnishing gas to consumers unless employed by or acting under the authority and direction of such person.
- (7) Open or cause to be opened, or reconnect or cause to be reconnected any valve lawfully closed or disconnected by a district steam corporation.
- (8) Turn on steam or cause it to be turned on or to reenter any premises when the same has been lawfully stopped from entering such premises.

- (9) Reconnect electricity, gas, or water connections or otherwise turn back on one or more of those utilities when they have been lawfully disconnected or turned off by the provider of the utility.
- (10) Alter, bypass, interfere with, or cut off any load management device, equipment, or system which has been installed by the electricity supplier for the purpose of limiting the use of electricity at peak-load periods, provided, however, if there has been a written request to remove the load management device, equipment, or system to the electric supplier and the electric supplier has not removed the device within two working days, there shall be no violation of this section.

(b) Any meter or service entrance facility found to have been altered, tampered with, or bypassed in a manner that would cause such meter to inaccurately measure and register the electricity, gas, or water consumed or which would cause the electricity, gas, or water to be diverted from the recording apparatus of the meter shall be prima facie evidence of intent to violate and of the violation of this section by the person in whose name such meter is installed or the person or persons so using or receiving the benefits of such unmetered, unregistered, or diverted electricity, gas, or water.

(c) For the purposes of this section, the term "gas" shall mean all types and forms of gas, including, but not limited to, natural gas.

(d) Criminal violations of this section shall be punishable as follows:

- (1) A violation of this section is a Class 1 misdemeanor.
- (2) A second or subsequent violation of this section is a Class H felony.
- (3) A violation of this section that results in significant property damage or public endangerment is a Class F felony.
- (4) Unless the conduct is covered under some other provision of law providing greater punishment, a violation that results in the death of another is a Class D felony.

(e) [Whoever is found in a civil action to have violated any provision] of this section [shall be liable to the electric, gas or water supplier in triple the amount of losses and damages sustained or five] thousand [dollars] (\$5,000), [whichever is greater].

(f) Nothing in this section shall be construed to apply to licensed contractors while performing usual and ordinary services in accordance with recognized customs and standards. (1901, c. 735; Rev., s. 3666; C.S., s. 4323; 1993, c. 539, s. 88; 1994, Ex. Sess., c. 24, s. 14(c); 2013-88, s. 1.)